Carangas—
Chipaya

/394 cont./

directly with my informants was a constant source of difficulties and misunderstandings for me. The chief obstacle which I had to surmount, however, was of a psychological nature: the strength of inertia and the mental laziness of the Čipaya. They offer a deaf resistance to the investigator, composed both of indifference and obstinacy, which the handsomest gifts cannot conquer.

Evenings in their round huts, they are not accustomed to gather together to narrate stories, as do the natives of Chaco. As soon as their last meal has been taken, they roll themselves in their blankets, extinguish their wretched fire of taquia (dried excrement), and sleep heavily until morn. During the festivals they drink, pray, and chew their coca, but never succumb to the joys of conversation.

When I began my investigation of tales and myths, I received the unanimous response that no one in the village had known any for a long time. I was conducted to a blind, paralytic old man, the oldest man of the tribe, who recited the myth of the origin of the Čipaya to me, which I have transcribed below. All the efforts I subsequently made to draw other tales out of him collided with his ignorance, which I believe to have been real.

The few tales which I was able to note down were practically all dictated to me by the corregidor of Chipaya, a young man about 20 years old who, with another inhabitant of the village, had gone voluntarily to present himself at Oruro to do his military service there. He had come back with a few vague rudiments of Spanish, comical manners, and a high /395/ opinion of his ability and of himself. He was my best informant. I was not able to find out if the tales he dictated to me were previously known to him, or if he had gone to ask his father for them to win the large premium I had promised to those who would come and tell stories about men or animals to me. As will be realized these tales are very disjointed and incoherent and constitute reminiscences of episodes rather than continuous narratives. They are ancient Andean myths which have passed to the level of diverting anecdotes. I do not

/158 cont./

257 who mentions them seems to consider them as /159/ indigenous.
352 The smoke escapes through the door, but in some huts, not very
[175] many it is true, a hole in the wall facilitates ventilation.

●513 Enormous wool blankets (čusi), extremely heavy, take the place of beds. They are warm enough for one to suffice to cover
513 for the night two or three people, who roll themselves in them. At
175 the beginning of the seventeenth century these blankets were in general use on the altiplano. "The bed which the people of the Sierra and the cold lands use," Cobo tells us, "is a large blanket called a chusi, which is spread on the ground. One half serves as a mattress and the other, which they pull up from the foot end, as a
[177] blanket or sheet. All the inhabitants of one house, fathers and sons, sleep in one blanket, although now under the influence of civilization
351 they are beginning to have separate beds." The present-day Andean Indians sleep on earth benches which are altogether lacking in
[174] Chipaya. One might conclude from this that they were unknown in pre-Columbian times and that they are only a crude imitation of European beds.

In some Čipaya huts one can find a wobbly table made of
[178] old boxes. The Čipaya use them only as an altar on which to place the heads of sacrificed animals or coca that they offer their guests when they celebrate a festival at home. Outside of these occasions the tables have no use.

Several wooden pegs thrust into the wall serve as pegs for clothes. The few articles to be seen are arranged in niches contrived in the wall or on small whatnots of earth shaped like swallows' nests (Fig. 2, F /see p. 150/).

354 To illuminate the always very dark interior of their huts, the Čipaya have tallow candles or, more frequently, very primitive small lamps: bowls (čua), full of tallow in which a wick of wool
[177] burns. This apparatus, which gives them only feeble light, has the Spanish name mecha, a practically certain indication that the idea came to them from the Creoles.